

## Workshop

# Global South-North Community-Based Rewilding:

# Interweaving Traditional Knowledge and Modern Science



## Hosts

- Global South Studies Center (GSSC), the University of Cologne
- Multidisciplinary Environmental Studies in the Humanities (MESH), the University of Cologne
- Rewilding the Anthropocene – a project of the European Research Council Advanced Grant

## Organizers

Prof. Michael Bollig, Global South Studies Center, University of Cologne  
[michael.bollig@uni-koeln.de](mailto:michael.bollig@uni-koeln.de)

Prof. Dan Smyer Yü, School of Ethnology & Sociology, Yunnan University and Global South Studies Center, the Cologne University  
[dsmyeryu@gmail.com](mailto:dsmyeryu@gmail.com); [dsmyeryu@uni-koeln.de](mailto:dsmyeryu@uni-koeln.de)

Dr. Léa Lacan, Postdoctoral Researcher in environmental anthropology, Global South Studies Center, University of Cologne  
[llacan@uni-koeln.de](mailto:llacan@uni-koeln.de)

David Greven, Scientific coordinator of the project Rewilding the Anthropocene and the CRC228 Future Rural Africa, University of Cologne  
[david.greven1@uni-koeln.de](mailto:david.greven1@uni-koeln.de)

## Venue

Steinfeld Monastery (Kloster Steinfeld), Kall-Steinfeld, Germany  
<https://www.kloster-steinfeld.com/de/home>

## Dates

29<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>th</sup> May 2024

## CONCEPT NOTE

The idea of rewilding is only around twenty-two years old (Monbiot 2014); however, rewilding science is already a hot conservation field that fosters diverse practice-based methods of biodiversity restoration (Lorimer et al 2015; Naundrup and Svenning 2015; Pettorelli et al 2019). While the concept of rewilding, initiated in the Global North, has been steadily introduced to different regions of the Global South, traditional/indigenous ecological knowledges of the Global South are increasingly referenced and lauded in Global-North-led environmental discourses, including those coming from the field of rewilding studies. Situated in the growing North-South interface of modern science and traditional understandings of multispecies coexistence, this international publishing workshop invites participating scholars, scientists, and conservation specialists to share their latest findings and offer their fresh comparative discussions of community-based rewilding in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe (Bollig 2022; Brooks et al 2012; Roe, Nelson and Sandbrook 2009; Berkes 2007).

With an awareness of the ongoing debates on the decolonial political epistemologies of the Global South (Menon 2022; Nunan et al 2023; Rigby 2020; Cornell 2007; Santos 2018; Escobar 2016), the workshop's community-centered outlook asks participants to bring traditional knowledges of both the North and the South to the forefront of the scientific inquiry of rewilding and to discuss how they can be interwoven with modern scientific knowledge of environmental rejuvenation and ecological sustainability (Kimmerer 2002; 2013). The workshop's contributing authors are therefore encouraged to address following questions: What is the role of local community-based knowledge and traditional worldviews in formulating and implementing rewilding plans? How do rewilding projects interact with more-than-human communities of humans and nonhumans living entangled lives? Where are the common grounds of traditional and modern scientific knowledge of nature in which the former includes humans as a member of nature and the latter tends to separate humans from nature? How do these ways of knowing overlap, communicate, mix? Do human rewilders perceive them-/ourselves not as a part of the rewilded habitats while rewilding the selected animals and/or plants? What exactly does being "wild" mean in both ecological and philosophical senses when rewilding science recreates what it calls "wilderness" and "wildness"? As a growing number of rewilding scientists and environmental scholars recognize the ecologically-regenerative self-will of nature (Blythe and Jepson 2020), how does this scientific trend respond to the traditionally cherished livingness of the earth as especially found among diverse indigenous human societies in the Global South? What are the connecting points and edges where traditional and scientific knowledge of conservation and rewilding can synergize and become co-generative of innovative knowledge for sustainable planetary futures?

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## PROGRAMME

### Wednesday, 29 May 2024

**16:00-16:30** Welcome address – Léa Lacan, Michael Bollig, Dan Smyer Yü  
Participant round-table self-introduction

Session One - Chair: Hauke-Peter Vehrs

**16:30-17:15** Upasana Ganguly - “Protecting the Garo Green Spine: A community led conservation initiative to secure safe passage for wildlife in Garo Hills, Meghalaya, North East India”  
(co-authored with Balsreng Sangma, Rimachi Leisan, Karthik Pandi, Sunil Kyarong, Aditi Dhillon, Sandeep Kr Tiwari and Vivek Menon)

**17:15-18:00** Michael Bollig - “The return of the giants: on the uneasy co-existence between humans and elephants in Namibia’s Northeast”

**18:30** Dinner

**20:00** Get-together

### Thursday, 30 May 2024

Session Two - Chair: Wisse van Engelen

**9:00-9:45** Ambika Aiyadurai – “Rewilding Tigers in Panna landscape and the role of Pardhis in Wildlife Conservation”

**9:45-10:30** Léa Lacan – “Rewilding the Simalaha floodplains in southwestern Zambia: between Barotse tradition and NGO-led conservation”

**10:30-11:00** Coffee break

Session Three - Chair: Emilie Köhler

**11:00-11:45** Sarah Mund – “Keeping Pacific salmon in a messy world – Reconsidering anthropogenic impacts in an Indigenous territory”

**11:45-12:30** Dan Smyer Yü – “Rethinking Wildness in Land Stewardship: Respatializing Humans, Elephants and Tigers in Premodern Xishuangbanna, Yunnan”  
(co-authored with Zhen Ma, Dali University)

**12:30-14:00** Lunch

Session Four - Chair: Julia Brekl

- 14:00-14:45** Lucía Bergós – “Unpacking Rewilding in Latin America: Actors, Narratives, and Dynamics in Uruguay”  
(co-authored with Magdalena Chouhy and Juan Martin Dabezies)
- 14:45-15:30** Thorsten Gieser – “How Rewilding Feels Like - Wolves, the Ethos, and the Return of the Ferocious to Germany”
- 15:30-16:00** Coffee break
- 16:00-18:00** Inspiration hike – discovering the Eifel
- 18:30** Dinner

Friday, 31 May 2024

- 9:00-9:15** Introducing the World Café discussions – preparing for publication
- 9:15-10:45** World Café (group discussions)
- 10:45-11:15** Coffee Break
- 11:15-11:30** Sharing the World Café results
- 11:30-12:30** Plenary discussion & organizing publications  
Concluding remarks
- 12:30** Lunch
- 14:00** Departure

## ABSTRACTS

### **The return of the giants: on the uneasy co-existence between humans and elephants in Namibia's Northeast**

Michael Bollig (University of Cologne)

Elephant numbers in northeastern Namibia have increased rapidly over the past three decades. While only some 3,000 elephants were counted there in 1990 when Namibia got independent, nowadays about 12,000 to 16,000 roam the area. The rapid increase in numbers is mainly due to emigration from the elephant-rich northern Botswanan Okavango Panhandle area. Elephants make use of a landscape that is characterized by three small national parks and a number of community-based conservation areas. The mainstay of the agro-pastoral population is rainfed maize-farming, cattle husbandry and the use of natural resources (e.g. reeds). In this co-existence landscapes humans and elephants are forced to co-adapt. Human-wildlife conflict represents a major challenge as elephants regularly damage crops and elephant-caused human mortalities add to the problem which is dominating local sentiments on conservation. However, increasing human-elephant interaction also leads to a growing intimacy between humans and elephants.

In my presentation I will first shed a light on the dynamics of the elephant population and at changing land use patterns in northeastern Namibia. Both, the expansion and transformation of rainfed agriculture and growing elephant numbers make farming risky. In the second part of my presentation I will suggest that changing land use and dynamics settlement patterns may contribute more to the vulnerability of rural farms than the growth of elephant herds. Part three focusses on local knowledge of elephant sociality, sensing and memory. Growing exposure to these megaherbivores also leads to increasing empirically based observation and shared knowledge on elephants. The final part of my presentation will look at strategies of co-adaptation between humans and elephants.

### **Protecting the Garo Green Spine: A community led conservation initiative to secure safe passage for wildlife in Garo Hills, Meghalaya, North East India**

Upasana Ganguly (Wildlife Trust of India)

Co-authored with: Balsreng Sangma, Rimachi Leisan, Karthik Pandi, Sunil Kyarong, Aditi Dhillon, Sandeep Kr Tiwari and Vivek Menon

Spanning across 8000 sq.km, and as part of the Indo-Burmese biodiversity hotspot, the Garo Hills in the state of Meghalaya in North East India, support an incredibly rich biodiversity. The Garo Hills Elephant Reserve has three protected areas, a reserve forest and five elephant corridors, which together link around 1500-1700 elephants. The Nokrek National Park along with the network of forest patches connecting to Balpakram National Park in this landscape forms the backbone of biodiversity of the region and is designated as 'Garo Green Spine'. Interestingly, only 7-8% of the forested area in the Garo Hills is under the control of the Meghalaya Forest Department; the remaining area is owned by local communities under the management and jurisdiction of the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC) Unscientific mining and age-old practices such as slash-and-burn cultivation or jhum have been

drivers of deforestation and fragmentation hindering the movement of wildlife and leading to human-wildlife conflict.

Despite the dependence on such agricultural practices crucial for core sustenance, the Garo tribes take it upon themselves to stitch together this 'spine' through community-led conservation initiative. The paper proposes to capture the spirit and the process behind the unique initiative by these communities along with Wildlife Trust of India, World Land Trust in partnership with the GHADC over the last two decades in protecting community forest lands as 'Village Reserve Forests'. This remarkable way of conservation has resulted in protection of approx. 4500 hectares of forest patches as Village Reserve Forests (VRFs), protection of two crucial elephant corridors and habitat restoration of another 400 hectares.

This is an affirmation of the indigenous rights, self-government and community empowerment creating a multi-level impact resulting in not just wildlife habitat protection but also a positive social impact on the communities with regards to their livelihood and lifestyle. Such conservation measures can be a big step towards sustainable environmental protection in the long term.

Keywords: Elephant Corridor, Community Conservation, Garo Hills, Meghalaya, Garo Tribe, Village Reserve Forest, Habitat Restoration, Land Conservation, Wildlife Trust of India

### **Rewilding Tigers in Panna landscape and the role of Pardhis in Wildlife Conservation**

Ambika Aiyadurai (Indian Institute of Technology – Gandhinagar)

Rewilding sites in India have poor, rural indigenous communities, who share their environment with megafauna and charismatic species. One such site is Panna Tiger Reserve in Central India where tigers were reintroduced after their extinction from the landscape. In this paper, I will examine the role of tribal communities in rewilding Panna and how rewilding has reshaped their relations with the Tiger reserve. I focus on Pardhis (once considered a 'criminal tribe', now renamed as De-notified tribe) in rewilding Panna. After the extinction of tigers in Panna, a species recovery plan began to reintroduce the tigers following the IUCN guidelines with the help of National Tiger Conservation Authority, scientists from Wildlife Institute of India, Madhya Pradesh State Forest Department, and local communities. Panna Tiger Reserve is now seen as one of the successful examples of rewilding in India as the tiger population increased from zero in 2009 to close to 70 this year.

This paper will address the much neglected human dimension of rewilding by examining how Pardhis respond to rewilding Panna? In the process of rewilding, Pardhi families were relocated outside Panna by offering a compensation package. Scholars call this a win-win situation for both tigers and Pardhis. Even after heavy criticism, the Fortress model of conservation separating humans from forests and tigers continues to be crucial in rewilding. Rewilding Panna means 'rehabilitating' Pardhis and relocating tigers in Panna means relocating Pardhi outside Panna. While Pardhis were asked to move out of Panna Tiger Reserve, for urban tourists, this continues to be a 'wild' area with megafauna and charismatic carnivores. In this paper, various conservation narratives will be documented by interviewing wildlife scientists Panna, for whom this is a site to prevent extinction and recovery of tigers. For the state, this is a revenue generation model of ecotourism. Panna is also celebrated as contributing to nation building due to the status of tigers being the national animal of India.



Conservation narratives often do not acknowledge the contestations about rewilding projects as they carry different meanings for different interest groups. The ‘new’ population of tigers in Panna has definitely shaped the landscape and redefined the role of Pardhis as they associated with Panna in the tourism economy as safari guides and bird guides. While their traditional livelihoods have been denied, their knowledge of wild animals and birds are now utilized in eco-tourism initiatives. On one hand, the attempts of engaging Pardhis in tourism could be viewed as a form of welfare by the state, NGOs and corporations, and on the other hand, rewilding process creates an idealistic version of ‘pristine’ nature for the tourists while depoliticizing and sanitizing the ‘conservation-induced’ relocation of Pardhis.

### **Rewilding the Simalaha floodplains in southwestern Zambia: between Barotse tradition and NGO-led conservation**

Léa Lacan (University of Cologne)

The precolonial kingdom of Barotseland in the Western Province of Zambia has a tradition of managing environmental resources including land, wildlife, forestry, and fisheries management. Since Zambia’s independence, however, this governance system has eroded. This paper examines how nature conservation projects, in particular the Simalaha Community Conservancy, in the South of the Barotse kingdom, opens up possibilities for reviving and developing Barotse environmental governance, but also challenges traditional structures of governance. The Simalaha Community Conservancy is a conservation initiative launched in 2011, prompted by the Barotse Senior Chief Inyambo Yeta and supported by the South African-based Peace Parks Foundation. The project promises to rewild the landscape between the Zambezi river and the vast Kafue National Park, reinstating the past coexistence between people and wildlife in alignment with the Barotse tradition, and reducing the impact of fisheries on the river ecosystems, while promoting local economic development.

This paper shows that the Conservancy fosters the cooperation between diverse actors including Barotse leaders, the Peace Parks Foundation, but also governmental workers, international donors, and local inhabitants. Thereby, it provides technical and financial means that support Barotse governance and leads to hybrid environmental management that involves both Barotse and governmentally-endorsed conservation knowledge and practices. Yet, this paper also shows that the project is highly contested at the local level, and that the rewilding initiatives, bringing human-wildlife conflicts and constraining fisheries-based livelihoods, spark discontent and distrust amongst local farmers and fishermen towards their Barotse leaders.

### **Keeping Pacific salmon in a messy world – Reconsidering anthropogenic impacts in an Indigenous territory**

Sarah Mund (University of Cologne)

On the West Coast of Canada, Pacific salmon species have sustained Indigenous peoples for millennia. Ample archeological research and oral traditions underline the ways in which Indigenous peoples and salmon have co-evolved along the North American West Coast: Indigenous people have transplanted salmon eggs, actively shaped salmon populations through

selective terminal fisheries as well as shaped and enhanced salmon habitat. These practices challenge dominant narratives framing this area as untouched wilderness and underline the deep entanglement of humans and their environment.

Since the first European settlers arrived in this area, once abundant salmon populations have continued to decline and pushed towards extinction. The reasons for this decline are diverse anthropogenic influences including industrial forestry and fishing, infrastructure, salmon farming and climatic changes. Ever since Pacific salmon populations started to decline, there have been numerous efforts to try and keep these iconic creatures in Pacific waters. Salmon – especially economically valuable species – have been artificially propagated, fisheries management has tried to regulate human interactions with salmon and infrastructure and resource extraction projects are supposed to address impacts on local salmon population. However, fish populations seem to continue to decline beyond human control.

This paper is based on a research collaboration with a First Nation to examine how salmon declines, fears of extinction and conservation measures are negotiated in an Indigenous territory. This approach challenges narratives of salmon declines which center on anthropogenic climate change. It focuses on the colonial disruption of Indigenous management and conservation efforts into current initiatives and struggles for Indigenous led salmon conservation and management. How do different actors - Indigenous and non-Indigenous – negotiate human-salmon futures in an Indigenous territory? This includes Indigenous and Western scientific epistemologies and ontologies on salmon-human interactions – what does a focus on Indigenous perspectives offer to keep salmon in a changing world?

### **Rethinking Wildness: Negotiated Human-Elephant-Tiger Borderlands in Premodern Xishuangbanna, Yunnan**

Dan Smyer Yü (Yunnan University)  
Co-authored with: Zhen Ma

From southern Inner Asia and Siberia to South and Southeast Asia, human societies and the habitats of elephants and tigers were historically intertwined over countless millennia before the arrival of the Little Ice Age (1300s – 1800s) and the subsequent fossil-fuel powered modern era (late 1700s – ). Humans, elephants, and tigers negotiated shared edges, borderlands, and common provisions from nature. Concurrent with competition for subsistence, conflicts over territory, and mutually beneficial trophic effects, elephants and tigers were iconic figures who also dwelled in human mythological worlds. Their relationship with humans deepened through their ecological encounters with human environments and their spiritual intrusion into the inner spheres of human beliefs and meaning-making systems across Asia. This paper, as a work of environmental humanities, revisits folk accounts of the ancient Dai people who invited elephants into closer proximity to humans as a way of maintaining safe distance with the highly revered, but feared, tigers in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan. It treats the enactment of the Dai's inter-species intent as a form of rewilding, enacted ecologically to respatialize multispecies relations for human collective survival. At the same time, it expands the meaning of rewilding from that of ecological restoration of particular damaged natural habitats and the biological reintroduction of associated species with minimum human presence, to a reinterpretation of wildness as a shared moral character of living beings, suggesting species-specific and ecologically-

conditioned freedom, autonomy, and engagement with neighboring species. The expanded meaning is invoked to support an argument that when ecologically and biologically manifested wildness is understood in moral terms, it holds ethical values for the current global endeavors for sustainable futures for multispecies flourishing.

### **Unpacking Rewilding in Latin America: Actors, Narratives, and Dynamics in Uruguay**

Lucía Bergós (Universidad de la República, Uruguay)

Co-authored with: Magdalena Chouhy and Juan Martin Dabezies

Latin America has a growing interest in rewilding, a concept that emphasizes a return to more natural ecosystems with minimal human intervention. This work identifies the key actors promoting rewilding in Uruguay, explores where and how it is being advocated, and the cultural discourses and validation networks involved. The study also explores potential global influences on the region's distribution and implementation of rewilding initiatives. This anthropological analysis sheds light on the evolving dynamics of Latin American conservation efforts, emphasizing the rewilding movement's cultural and societal aspects.

### **How Rewilding Feels Like - Wolves, the Ethos, and the Return of the Ferocious to Germany**

Thorsten Gieser (University of Koblenz)

In his book *Feral* (2014), George Monbiot proposes a concept of rewilding that goes beyond the restoration of ecosystems to include the rewilding of human life itself. For Monbiot, rewilding is not just about reintroducing species into their natural habitats, but also about reconnecting humans with the wild aspects of themselves that have been diminished by modernity and urbanisation. In my paper, I take this rewilding of human life in relation to the return of wolves as a starting point to consider *rewilding as something that can be felt: it can be conceived as an affective, embodied and sensory affair*. What does rewilding feel like when the returning animal is a large carnivore that poses a potential threat to both domestic animals and humans themselves? I argue that rewilding here challenges and transforms (at least some) people's *ethos*, 'the tone, character and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood' (Geertz 1973:89; see also Desjarlais 1992). What makes wolves special in this respect is that they are not just any wild animal. I argue that they embody an affective force of the wild that, following Kirsten Hastrup (2013), can be called the *ferocious* (i.e. the excessive, intense, violent), with their hunting and killing behaviour resulting in a particularly disturbing *necroaesthetic* (Gieser 2023). How are people in a 'civilised', late modern society affected by and cope with the return of the wild, which disrupts the usual affective structure of their familiar lifeworld? As a consequence, successful rewilding in this case requires a new *affective resilience*, i.e. the ability *not* to be affected (too much) by the ferocious and to develop constructive ways of dealing with and coping with this force of wolves.

## SHORT BIOGRAPHIES

**Hauke-Peter Vehrs** is currently the study coordinator for the MA programme "Culture and Environment in Africa" at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Cologne and conducts research in the Collaborative Research Centre 228 "Future Rural Africa". In his work, he focuses on topics such as conservation, environmental (in)justice, pastoralism, defaunation and coexistence, and multispecies ethnography. Currently he is conducting research in two different contexts. In the northeast of Namibia, he examines the history and practices of conservation and the effects on local communities. Furthermore, he conducts fieldwork in the northwest of Kenya - a region heavily influenced by pastoral livelihoods - and works on the historical examination of wildlife eradication during colonial times, the socio-ecological impacts of this defaunation process, and looks at the attempts to reintroduce individual wildlife species. In 2022, his dissertation was published by James Currey under the title "Pokot Pastoralism: Environmental Change and Socio-Economic Transformation in North-West Kenya."

**Michael Bollig** is Professor of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Cologne where his key interests lie in the environmental anthropology of sub-Saharan Africa. His current research projects focus on the social-ecological dynamics connected to large-scale conservation projects, the commodification of nature and the political ecology of pastoralism. He is the author of *Shaping the African Savannah. From Capitalist Frontier to Arid Eden in Namibia* (2020), *Risk Management in a Hazardous Environment* (2006), co-author of *African Landscapes* (2009) with O. Bubenzer, *Pastoralism in Africa* (2013) with M. Schnegg and H.P. Wotzka, and *Resilience and Collapse in African Savannahs* (2017) with D. Anderson.

**Upasana Ganguly** heads the Right of Passage: Wildlife Corridors Projects at Wildlife Trust of India and has been working in the wildlife NGO sector for the last 10 years. Her interest has been in landscape ecology and connectivity conservation for large mammals like Asian Elephants and Tigers. She is one of the co-authors of the Right of Passage publication- a green print to secure 101 Elephant Corridors across India. She leads a network of Green Corridor Champions- training and empowering local community-based organizations for protecting elephant corridors and habitats across 11 states in India. She is a member of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and its Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group. Her work also involves forging international collaborations and mobilizing funding support through foundations and charities for the wildlife corridors projects at WTI.

**Wisse van Engelen** is a PhD researcher in the ERC-funded project 'Rewilding the Anthropocene', studying the intersection of disease control and wildlife conservation with a focus on foot-and-mouth disease in Botswana. His research interests lie mainly in conservation social sciences and the environmental humanities, with a theoretical orientation that focuses on rethinking politics in the Anthropocene. Wisse has a multidisciplinary background in conservation sciences at Wageningen University, The Netherlands, and wrote his MSc thesis on the politics of conservation-tourism partnerships in South Africa.

**Ambika Aiyadurai** is an anthropologist of wildlife conservation with a special interest in human-animal relations and community-based conservation. Her ongoing and long-term research aims are to understand how local and global forces shape human-animal relations. After spending a few years as a wildlife biologist, her interest in Anthropology began while examining human-dhole conflict in Arunachal Pradesh. Ambika has a PhD in Anthropology from the National University of Singapore in 2016. She is trained in natural and social sciences with master's degrees in Wildlife Sciences from the Wildlife Institute of India (Dehradun) and Anthropology, Environment and Development from University College London (UK), funded by Ford Foundation's International Fellowship Program. She is Associate Professor (Humanities and Social Sciences) at the Indian Institute of Technology – Gandhinagar. In 2017, she was awarded the Social Sciences Research Council (SSRC) Transregional Research Junior Scholar Fellowship. Her monograph, *Tigers are our brothers: Anthropology of Wildlife Conservation in Northeast India*, was published in 2021 (OUP). She has two co-edited volumes, *Ecological Entanglements* (Orient BlackSwan) and *More than Just Footnotes* (Bookwell Publications). Her current project examines human-animal relations at the margins from caste and tribal perspectives.

**Léa Lacan** is a postdoctoral researcher in environmental anthropology at the University of Cologne and a member of the Global South Studies Center (GSSC). She did her PhD on human-forest relations and politics of forest conservation in Kenya. Her book *Forest Politics in Kenya's Tugen Hills* will be published in July 2024 with James Currey. She is now working within the project 'Rewilding the Anthropocene', funded by the European Research Council, in the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area in Southern/Central Africa. Her current research focuses on the politics of local wildlife conservation projects in South-Western Zambia at the crossroads of political ecology and more-than-human anthropology.

**Emilie Köhler** completed her master's degree in Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Bayreuth. There, she deepened her interest in human-environment relations and studied a rewilding project of European bison in the heart of Germany. Currently, she works as a doctoral researcher in the ERC project "Rewilding the Anthropocene", where she explores how the use of modern technologies reshapes transboundary elephant conservation in the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area.

**Sarah Mund** is currently a PhD candidate in anthropology of the a.r.t.e.s. Graduate School for the Humanities at the University of Cologne. Since her Master's research she has been collaborating with First Nations communities on the West Coast of Canada. Her research focus lies on environmental anthropology and indigenous issues.

**Dan Smyer Yü** is Kuige Professor of Ethnology, School of Ethnology and Sociology and a Global Faculty Member at the Global South Studies Center, University of Cologne. Currently he serves as the co-lead of the Himalayan University Consortium Thematic Working Group on Environmental Humanities and a member of the Advisory Board of Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology. His interdisciplinary research areas are environmental humanities, religion and ecology, Himalayan studies, sacred landscapes, indigenous environmental knowledge, and



climate change. He is the author of *Mindscaping the Landscape of Tibet: Place, Memorability, Eco-aesthetics* (De Gruyter 2015), and co-editor of *Storying Multipolar Climes of the Himalaya, Andes and Arctic: Anthropocenic Climate and Shapeshifting Watery Lifeworlds* (Routledge 2023) and *Trans-Himalayan Borderlands: Livelihoods, Territorialities, Modernitiess* (Amsterdam University Press 2017).

**Julia Brekl** is Social and Cultural Anthropologist and Doctoral Researcher in the ERC “REWILDING the Anthropocene” project by the University of Cologne. In her PhD project she looks at changing human-cattle-lion interactions in northern Botswana and how the conservation concept Coexistence is shaping and being shaped by those interactions. She conducted one year of ethnographic research in the eastern panhandle of the Okavango Delta and followed the activities of a lion conservation NGO and cattle farmers. Furthermore, Julia has a particular interest in the interplay of local and Indigenous knowledge, research and conservation.

**Lucía Bergós** is a scientist at the University of the Republic (Udelar) in Uruguay. Her work revolves around political ecology and biological conservation, approached with an interdisciplinary perspective. Lucía has held positions in both academic and governmental management, focusing on environmental justice, the integration of local and academic knowledge, and the dynamics of society-nature relations within biodiversity conservation strategies. Currently, she is actively engaged in the research project "Animal Dialogues: Tensions and Synergies around the Management of Non-Human Life in Uruguay" and the interdisciplinary initiative "Return to the Wild: Views on Nature Management in Uruguay," both at Udelar.

**Thorsten Gieser** is Lecturer in Anthropology at the University of Koblenz and Research Associate in the ERC Project BOAR at the Czech Academy of Sciences. He is an environmental anthropologist with a focus on human-wildlife-coexistence in Germany, with a focus on the return of wolves (*Leben mit Wölfen*, Transcript 2023; *Living with Wolves*, Transcript forthcoming) and hunting (edited book *Chasing Wild Pigs: Towards an Anthropology of Hunting*, Helsinki University Press forthcoming).

**David Greven** is currently working as project coordinator for the ERC Rewilding and CRC228 Future Rural Africa at the University of Cologne. He studied ‘Languages and Cultures in Africa’ and ‘History’ (dual bachelor) and finished his master in ‘Culture and Environment in Africa’ at the University of Cologne. He is working on his PhD in ‘Social and Cultural Anthropology’ under the supervision of Dr. Clemens Greiner. His research is part of the CRC 228 “Future Rural Africa: Future-making and social-ecological transformation” and focuses on a large-scale geothermal project in northern Kenya and how it affects local dynamics in an area that has been largely neglected in terms of infrastructure in the past (Subproject C02 “Energy Futures”). He is mostly interested in how infrastructure (or part of it) is enabling new (de-)generative processes, affecting its implementation, utilization, politicization and (re-)negotiation.